

## 1.9.5 Drugs and Substance Misuse

### Regulations and standards

#### England

- [Regulation 10: The health and well-being standard](#)
- [Guide to the health and well-being standard](#)
- [Regulation 11: The positive relationships standard](#)
- [Guide to the positive relationships standard](#)
- [Regulation 12: The protection of children standard](#)
- [Guide to the protection of children standard](#)
- [Regulation 19: Behaviour management and discipline](#)
- [Regulation 23: Medicines](#)

#### Wales

- [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
- [Regulation 15: Personal plan](#)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/15/made>
- [Regulation 18: Provider assessment](#)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/18/made>
- [Regulation 27: Safeguarding policies and procedures](#)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/27/made>
- [Regulation 33: Access to health and other services](#)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/33/mad>

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## **1. Definition**

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Drugs and Substances are defined as any substance, whether restricted or prohibited, which may have a harmful effect upon a child such as:

Alcohol, Cigarettes, Tobacco, Aerosols, Ecstasy, Khat, Magic Mushrooms, Petrol, Solvents and all controlled substances such as Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Cannabis, Cocaine, Hallucinogens, Hashish and Heroine.

It also includes legal highs which are substances that mimic the effects of illegal drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines, but are not controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act.

See also: **Frank – Drugs A-Z**

## **2. Access/Use of Drugs and Substances**

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### **2.1 Purchasing/Obtaining Drugs or Substances - General**

#### **2.2 Cigarettes and Tobacco**

#### **2.3 Alcohol**

#### **2.4 Aerosols, Gas, Glue, and Petrol**

#### **2.5 Controlled Drugs or Substances**

### **2.1 Purchasing/Obtaining Drugs or Substances - General**

All reasonable measures must be used to reduce or prevent children from obtaining drugs or substances which may harm them.

If it is known or suspected that children are obtaining products which may harm them, whether off the streets, from dealers or traders of any kind, the manager and social worker must be informed and a strategy adopted to reduce or prevent it.

This may include engaging or involving the supplier, if it is safe to do so.

If the problem persists or is serious, relevant specialists or bodies, including Trading Standards or the Police, should be informed.

### **2.2 Cigarettes and Tobacco**

Staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke in front of children. Each home should designate an area, where staff may smoke.

Those children who are permitted to smoke may only do so outside the home; in an area designated by the Manager.

Children may only smoke if the social worker and, preferably, the child's parents approve. If approval is given, the arrangements (see next paragraph) for this must be outlined in the child's Placement Plan; together with a clear plan for helping the child to reduce or cease the habit.

Staff are not permitted to purchase or give cigarettes, tobacco, or the materials for making or lighting cigarettes or tobacco to children.

### **2.3 Alcohol**

All homes should be alcohol free zones; alcohol should not be brought or kept on the premises and children should not normally be taken into licensed premises, unless it is part of a clear plan leading toward independence or a special occasion; e.g. Christmas. In any case, children may not be allowed to purchase or consume alcohol.

Staff are not permitted to consume alcohol whilst on duty and should not arrive at work under the influence of alcohol.

### **2.4 Aerosols, Gas, Glue, and Petrol**

Managers must ensure that aerosols, gas, glue, petrol and similar substances are only used for the purpose they were designed for; and that all reasonable measures are taken to restrict their use to staff and children who are known to pose no risk to themselves or others if they have access to them.

The arrangements for the obtaining, storage and use of these substances in each home must be outlined in the Staff Handbook and Children's Guide or individual children's **Placement Plans**.

### **2.5 Controlled drugs or substances**

Further procedures are provided in **First Aid and Medication Procedure** re:

Under no circumstances may controlled drugs and substances, other than those prescribed by a medical practitioner, be permitted in any Home.

## **3. Prevention and Planning**

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The manager of each home must ensure that information, guidance and advice on the risks associated with harmful drugs and substances are available to all children in the home.

Additionally, any child known or suspected to be at participating in drug or substances misuse activities must be provided with the following:

- Targeted relevant information, guidance and advice to help reduce or prevent such risks;
- A strategy for managing the risk, outlined in an Individual Behavioural Support Plan (IBSP).

The strategy should state whether, and in what circumstances, the Police will be notified.

Some possible indications of drug and substance misuse are:

- Sudden changes of mood;
- Irritable;
- Loss of appetite;
- Increased appetite - possibly want sweet things more;

- Drowsiness or sleepiness;
- Evidence of telling lies;
- Unexplained loss of money or belongings;
- Unusual smells, stains or marks on the body, clothes or around the house.

It is important not to jump to the wrong conclusion, but speak to the child's social worker if you are concerned. Access to these services should be done in conjunction with the child's social worker.

Young people often have access to a range of domestic products that are harmful and potentially fatal to them when inhaled. Staff should be vigilant with children/young people around aerosol products, nail varnish, corrective fluid, glues etc.

## **4. Emergency**

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If it suspected that a child is misusing harmful drugs or substances and no Strategy exists to reduce or prevent the behaviour, the Manager of the home and relevant social worker(s) should be contacted and an agreement reached on how to proceed; this will include whether the Police will be notified.

If there are immediate risks which make it impractical to contact the manager or social worker, staff/carers should take what actions are immediately necessary then inform the manager and social worker(s) at the first opportunity.

The actions that staff/carers take will be dependent on the circumstances and the degree of offence or injury that is likely, but staff/carers must be mindful of the following:

- a. The overall responsibility of staff/carers is to protect children, themselves and others from injury and reduce or prevent the likelihood of criminal offences;
- b. If there is a risk of serious harm, injury or of a serious criminal offence and staff/carers are unable to manage safely, the Police should be notified;
- c. If solvents are involved, allow air to circulate freely and extinguish naked lights;
- d. If any person is unconscious, in a fit or convulsing or otherwise seriously ill, emergency first aid should be given and an ambulance requested. The emergency services should be informed that there are suspicions of drug or solvent misuse;
- e. The drugs/substances should be removed or confiscated, preferably with the co-operation of the child(ren), and preferably by two staff/carers; who must record their actions, describing what they have obtained and where it has been safely stored;
- f. If children do not co-operate or there is a risk of Injury or Damage to Property, it may be necessary to use **Physical Intervention**, conduct a Search or call for Police assistance.

See the following additional Chapters:

**Managing Behaviours Policy**

**Searching Children Procedures**

**Offending and Anti-Social Behaviour – Guidance on when to Involve the Police Procedures**

No further action, beyond making the situation safe and attempting to confiscate harmful drugs or substances, should be taken without a manager's authorisation, preferably in consultation with the relevant social worker.

However, the staff/carers should undertake the following if a manager is not available within a reasonable timescale:

- Legal but potentially harmful substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, aerosols, gas, glue, and petrol should then be put in a safe place out of the reach of children or disposed of safely;
- Controlled substances and any associated materials or paraphernalia must be placed in a clearly marked box or other strong container, sealed and given to the manager who must arrange for it to be taken to a competent authority e.g. Pharmacist or doctor; and a receipt obtained.

When safe to do so, the manager and relevant social workers should be notified and a decision reached on the actions/measures which should be taken. This should include whether the Police should be notified.

## **5. Recording**

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Normally, the occurrence should be noted in the home's Daily Log, child's Daily Record with detail recorded in a Detail Record.

If an Incident occurs; for example, a child is taken to hospital or the Police provide assistance, it should be recorded as such and subject to Management Review.

For definition of Incident and guidance on recording and management review, see: **Incidents - General Guidance**.

## **Revision History**

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Date last updated: May 2020

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**End**

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